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ABSTRACT

This document describes the School-Community Guidance Center (SCGC), a center created by the Austin (Texas) Independent School District to provide support services for students assigned to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and the Gardner-Betts House (GBH) because of their contact with the juvenile justice system or their at-risk status. The introduction to the report explains the state legislation which authorized the creation of SCGCs. The program description section discusses the SCGC, the ALC Component, and the GBH Juvenile Detention Facility Component. Other sections examine the level system and three-tier removal system used at the ALC. ALC enrollment and student characteristics are described and program costs are reviewed. Following the bibliography are attachments which further explain the level system, the restructuring of the ALC, student offenses, and the population served by the GBH. Findings of a program evaluation are discussed, including the major findings that: (1) the level system appears successful in changing students' problem behaviors; (2) the level system has increased staff workload; (3) recidivism has decreased; (4) about one-third of ALC students could have been expelled or arrested for their offenses; (5) the district discipline reporting files are not being maintained and updated completely by many schools; and (6) more students are remaining at the ALC for more than one semester, which may strain the current staff unless the three-tier removal system is used efficiently. (NB)

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Austin Independent School District

Reaching for New Levels

91: School-Community Guidance Center 1990 - 91

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Office of Research and Evaluation

August, 1991

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School-Community Guidance Center, 1990-91: Reaching for New Levels

Executive Summary

Austin Independent School District
Department of Management Information
Office of Research and Evaluation

Author: Lydia Williams-Robertson

Program Description

The School-Community Guidance Center (SCGC) provides support services for students assigned to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and Gardner-Betts House (GBH) because of their contact with the juvenile justice system or "at-risk" status.

SCGC funds provide three project specialists who serve as liaisons between AISD, students, parents, and community agencies. Two provide counseling and tutoring services at the ALC; one provides educational services at GBH.

Students may receive SCGC services when referred by a District staff person, or by the juvenile court if they meet the criteria established by the grant. SCGC staff work with the students to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase attendance, parental involvement and academic performance.
- Reduce problem behavior, contact with the juvenile justice system, and dropping out.
- Provide academic support, citizenship skills, and vocational information.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC) Component

The ALC serves middle and high school students who have been removed from their home schools primarily because of multiple discipline incidents and provides continuing educational opportunities for these students.

The Three-Tier Removal System: During the 1990-91 school year, AISD implemented a new system to provide home school administrators with options other than immediate removal to the ALC, thereby reducing ALC enrollment. The new system is organized into three "tiers":

Tier 1: Probated Removal/Expulsion
Tier 2: ALC Referral
Tier 3: Removal to Juvinal Court Youth Shelter

The Level System: In previous years, students remained at the ALC for the duration of the semester in which they were assigned. However, in the fall of 1990, the ALC was restructured to reflect it's change from a "detention facility" to a "treatment facility," with a focus on modifying behavior. Students at the ALC must work through a level system, in which students must exhibit specified behaviors. These behaviors must be maintained for a specific number of days in order for the student to advance to the next level. Students who successfully complete the level system (requiring a minimum of 35 days) may return to their home school. Students who do not complete the level system must attend the ALC until they can demonstrate and maintain the target behaviors.

Gardner-Betts House (GBH) Juvenile Detention Facility Component

One SCGC-funded project specialist and one AISD-funded teacher provide services for juveniles detained at GBH while awaiting a court hearing. Another AISD-funded teacher provides services at the Juvenile Court Youth Shelter. The project specialist at GBH functions primarily as a teacher and instructional coordinator. Other services provided by the project specialist include basic academic skills, career education, recreation, arts and crafts, and life skills.

Major Findings

1. The level system appears to have been successful in changing students' problem behaviors. Of the 20 students who completed the level system and returned to their home schools by the end of the fall, 1990 semester, 85% were still in school 12 weeks later. By contrast, 61% of the 163 students who returned to their home schools at the end of the fall, 1989 semester, were still in school 12 weeks later.

2. However, according to SCGC staff the level system has increased their workload with increased paperwork.

3. Recidivism has decreased substantially. Of the 119 students who completed the level system and returned to their home schools during the entire 1990-91 school year, 6% were subsequently reassigned to the ALC, compared to 63% last year.

4. About one third (34%) of the students attending the ALC this year could have been expelled or arrested because of the severity of their offenses (e.g., arson, sale of a controlled substance).

5. The District discipline reporting files are not being maintained and updated completely by many schools. Of the 528 students referred to the ALC for behavioral reasons, one in four (28%) did not have this information entered into the file. Therefore, actual implementation and usage of the Tier 1 removals cannot be accurately assessed. However, the number of behavioral referrals to the ALC has not significantly decreased, suggesting that home school administrators have not yet begun to avail themselves fully of the options provided by Tier 1 of the three-tier system.

6. More students are remaining at the ALC for more than one semester, and unless home school administrators begin to utilize fully the options offered by the three-tier removal system, ALC enrollment may increase to the point that the current staff of 32 will be unable to provide services for students.

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SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER, 1990-91: REACHING FOR NEW LEVELS.

FINAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the 67th Texas Legislature authorized School-Community Guidance Centers (SCGC) for school districts in a number of both large and small cities across the state. These centers were designed to work with truant officers, police departments, and juvenile probation units to provide services for students with severe behavioral problems.

In 1983, the 68th Texas Legislature changed the emphasis of the centers to give first priority to students found by the courts to have engaged in delinquent conduct, or conduct indicating a need for supervision. The centers' objective was to reduce students' disruptive behavior, thus decreasing contact with the juvenile justice system.

Individual centers are developed to meet the individual needs of their school districts, and no two centers are exactly alike. However, all centers are required to include the following components:

- Procedures for admitting and exiting students from the center;
- Specified target groups to be served by the center. All centers must serve adjudicated youth and other "at-risk" groups, with adjudicated youth as the first priority;
- Instructional components which address the essential elements and procedures for diagnosis of specific academic problems;
- A parental involvement component including parental notification, consent, and access to information;
- A community involvement component which includes coordination with agencies providing services for children;
- A counseling component;
- Staff development programs for SCGC personnel;
- Follow-up services for students after leaving the center and returning to school; and
- Procedures for evaluation of the center.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Overview

The School-Community Guidance Center (SCGC) provides support services for students assigned to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and Gardner-Betts House (GBH) because of their contact with the juvenile justice system or "at-risk" status.

The ALC provides continuing educational opportunities for those students who have been removed from their home schools, usually for disruptive behavior. GBH is the Travis County detention center where juvenile offenders are held while awaiting their court hearing. SCGC funds provide three project specialists who serve as liaisons between AISD, students, and community agencies. Two provide counseling and tutoring services at the ALC; one provides educational services at GBH. Evaluation resources include one half-time evaluation associate funded by the grant, with supervision provided by the Systemwide Evaluation evaluator.

Student Eligibility

Students may receive SCGC services when referred by a District staff person or by the juvenile court. Students must meet the following criteria:

1. The student's parents agree to the student's participation;
2. The student agrees to participate and cooperate in the program; and
3. The student has been identified as "high risk" through **one or more** of the following events:

    a. At least one recent, formal contact with the juvenile court,
    b. Identification as a dropout or school leaver,
    c. Multiple discipline incidents at school, and/or
    d. Identification as a potential dropout.

SCGC staff work with the students to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase attendance,
- Improve academic performance,
- Decrease disruptive behavior,
- Decrease contact with the juvenile justice system,
- Reduce dropouts,
- Increase parental involvement, and
- Provide academic support, citizenship skills, and vocational information.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC) Component

The ALC provides continuing educational services for middle and high school students who have been removed from their home schools primarily due to discipline problems.

The Three-Tier Removal System

During the 1990-91 school year, AISD implemented a new system to provide home school administrators with greater flexibility in removing students from their campus. The objective was to reduce ALC enrollment by offering administrators options other than immediate referral to the ALC. The new system is organized into three tiers:

Tier 1: Probated Removal: For students whose behavior necessitates a removal hearing, but who (in the opinion of the principal) do not require the structure and supervision of the ALC and would benefit either from remaining at the home school or being placed at another regular campus. This probated removal can be revoked at any time.

Tier 2: ALC Referral: For students whose behaviors are inappropriate for continued placement at a regular school campus. Students referred to the ALC must work through the level system before they are eligible to return to their home school.

Tier 3: Removal to Juvenile Court Youth Shelter: For students whose behavior is not suitable for continuation in a regular school program, and/or who were not successful in an alternative school program. These students may be placed in the day program of PHASES, a program at the Youth Emergency Shelter at the Travis County Juvenile Court where an AISD-funded teacher provides educational services.

The Level System

In previous years, students remained at the ALC for the duration of the semester in which they were assigned. However, **in 1990 the ALC program was restructured to reflect its change from a "detention facility" to a "treatment facility," with a focus on modifying behavior.** Students placed at the ALC must work through a **level system**, in which students must exhibit the following behaviors:

- Be on time to class;
- Bring notebook paper, pen and pencil;
- Pay attention and follow instructions;
- Stay on task;
- Respect self, others, and all property; and
- Follow all school rules.

These behaviors must be maintained for a specific number of days in order for the student to advance to the next level:

Level I: Must complete 5 successful days.
Level II: Must complete 10 successful days.
Level III: Must complete 20 successful days.
Level IV: Initiate return to home school.

Once a student reaches Level IV, he or she is then eligible to return to his or her home school. **Students who have not completed the level system by the end of a given semester must return to the ALC the following semester and will be retained at the ALC until they complete the level system. In essence, students must attend the ALC until they can demonstrate and maintain the target behaviors.**

Gardner-Betts House (GBH) Juvenile Detention Facility Component

One SCGC-funded project specialist and one AISD-funded teacher provide services for juveniles detained at GBH while awaiting a court hearing. In 1990-91, a total of 638 juveniles were detained anywhere from 1 to 92 days, with the average stay being 7.6 days (see Attachment D for more information). The project specialist at GBH functions primarily as a teacher and instructional coordinator. Other service areas provided by the project specialist include:

- Basic academic skills. Reading, writing, and mathematics work geared to the individual student's level of ability. If the student expresses an interest in keeping up with his or her coursework, the project specialist can arrange for assignments to be sent from the student's home school. Participation in classes is reported to the District so that students will receive attendance credit for the time spent in detention.

- Career education. Counseling and career awareness activities are provided. A unit is also used which provides easy-to-read booklets that describe the lives of successful people in a variety of fields.

- Recreation. Daily recreational activities are organized and scheduled.

- Arts and Crafts. Materials are available to give students a chance to express themselves visually and creatively. At the same time, they have an opportunity to discuss feelings, events, and ideas in a nonthreatening situation.

- Life Skills. Guest speakers, books, and films provide information on family and financial planning, child abuse, and mental and physical health.

THE LEVEL SYSTEM

Findings:

1. ALC staff reported satisfaction with the implementation of the level system, although some modifications are planned. All staff reported observable behavioral changes in students who successfully completed the level system.

2. The level system was most successful among students who had been assigned to the ALC for the first time. A greater proportion of these students completed the level system, and in a shorter period of time, than students who had been assigned to the ALC before.

3 After completing the level system, students appear to be successful at their home schools. Fewer students dropped out, were expelled, or were returned to the ALC compared to last year.

4. Advantages reported by staff included:

   - The level system placed responsibility for behavior on the student,
   - Return to home schools was based on observable behavior change and not on "time served,"
   - Counselors could focus their efforts on specific behaviors for individual students,
   - Behavioral expectations could be applied to "real life," such as behavior in the workplace, and
   - Students could track their own day-to-day progress, and interested parents could also monitor progress.

5. Disadvantages reported by staff included:

   - The more transient nature of the students' enrollment resulted in increased paperwork.
   - More students remained at the ALC at the end of the fall semester, resulting in higher enrollment for longer periods of time.

Implementation

All staff interviewed (ALC principal, program director, and SCGC project specialists) reported that, overall, implementation of the level system was successful. Students who completed the level system showed observable behavior changes. Staff reported that despite the increased paperwork, all ALC staff worked together successfully to implement the level system. Some modifications are planned for the coming academic year.

Procedure

On the first day a student arrives at the ALC to start classes, he or she is given a "point sheet" by the first-period teacher. Students receive one point for demonstrating each of the expected behaviors during each class period, a total of 37 possible points per day. For each level, the student must receive a certain percentage of the total possible points to get credit for that day. Each level requires a higher percentage and a greater number of days. Students are responsible for keeping their point sheets and bringing them to each class, each day. Attachment A outlines the expected behaviors and requirements for each level of the system.

During each class, the teacher is responsible for assigning points to each student for that class period according to established guidelines. The first-period teacher is responsible for totaling the previous day's points for each student, for placing that student at the appropriate day and level, and for documenting each student's overall progress on a "Level System Documentation Sheet."

Advantages

The most significant advantage of the level system is that it requires students to demonstrate and maintain a change in their behavior in order to be eligible to return to their home schools. This places the responsibility for his or her length of stay on the individual student. Required behaviors are presented to the student, and it is the student's responsibility to meet those expectations or not. If he or she does not meet those requirements, then he or she must accept the consequences (remaining at the ALC indefinitely). Other advantages include:

- Highly motivated students may return to their home schools very quickly;
- Students with more persistent problem behaviors and low motivation must remain at the ALC for as long as it takes to change their behavior;
- Counselors can pinpoint specific behavior problems for each student and focus their counseling according to each student's individual needs and behavior problems;
- The expected behaviors (such as being on time, being prepared, obeying rules, and respecting others) are applicable in a "real world" context, such as in the work place;
- The point sheets provide day-to-day feedback, allowing students to track their own progress, and allowing them to see the cause and effect of their own behavior;
- Many students take great pride in their progress, use their point sheets to "show off" among peers at a lower level, giving their less successful peers incentive to "catch up"; and
- Parents can also get involved and monitor their children's progress.

Disadvantages

For the project specialists, the major disadvantage was the increased paperwork. In previous years, students exited as a group at the end of the semester. All that was required was preparing a packet containing a checklist of students' needs and a copy of their grades to be delivered to the principal at the end of the semester. This year, as each student reaches Level IV, a project specialist must monitor the student's progress for five days, send a letter to his or her parents, complete a withdrawal sheet, accompany the student to the home school to ease the transition, and make follow-up calls to see how the student is doing. This must be done continuously throughout the year, for each individual student.

Another major disadvantage was higher enrollment for longer periods of time. In previous years, only students who were referred during the last six weeks of a given semester were retained for the following semester. This resulted in low enrollment at the beginning of each semester. However, this year, almost two thirds (63%) of the fall enrollees remained at the ALC for the spring semester, compared to 22% retained last year. **With more students being retained over more than one semester, unless home schools begin to utilize fully the options offered by the three-tier removal system, ALC enrollment may increase to the point that the current staff of 32 will be unable to provide adequate services for any students.**

Proposed Modifications

Some of the modifications proposed by the principal and program director of the ALC include:

- Make target behaviors more specific. One in particular, "Respect self and others," may be too vague.

- Increase the number of days required to complete the level system, particularly the lower levels. Some students appear to be able to "coast" through the lower levels, and they may complete the level system too quickly to ensure long-term behavior change.

- Increase privileges and incentives, particularly at Level IV. Students may not be able to return immediately to their home schools upon reaching Level IV, and they may need extra incentives to motivate them to maintain their behavior until they can be returned to their home schools.

- Provide home school administrators and teachers with information about the level system, in order to enable home school staff to inform students of what to expect at the ALC and to help counteract the negative impressions that many home schools have toward the ALC and returning students (see Swanson & Williams-Robertson, 1990).

Project Specialists

Project specialists perform a multitude of duties at the ALC, some of which are technically inappropriate for their positions. However, both project specialists expressed the attitude of "We all pitch in and do whatever needs to be done." The duties that they listed were:

- Enrollment and orientation of students;
- Counseling students for minor behavioral referrals, as well as personal counseling;
- Parent conferences, both in person and over the phone, as well as calling parents about absent students;
- Course planning and scheduling for high school students, including assisting these students in planning course schedules after returning to their home schools, to help keep them on track for graduation;
- Taking students home when they are removed from the ALC for behavioral reasons, or because of illness;
- Hall and cafeteria monitoring, due to understaffing in these areas; and
- Monitoring students in in-school-suspension (ISS). These students usually are sent to the office, but when the office gets too crowded, these students are sent to the counseling office.

According to the program director, the services of the SCGC project specialists are invaluable to the ALC program, because they essentially double the counseling resources the ALC can provide. The more interaction students have with staff, the less likely they are to become isolated and alienated, thus becoming less at risk for dropping out. To that end, he points out that the project specialist's duties that do not involve student contact should be reduced as much as possible.

Effectiveness

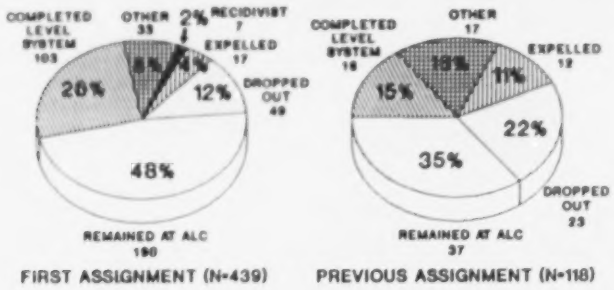
According to all staff interviewed (principal, program director, and SCGC project specialists) the level system produced observable, documentable behavior changes in most students who successfully worked through it.

The level system appears to have been most successful among students assigned to the ALC for the first time. Many of these students had never been in trouble before and/or were referred for relatively minor offenses. These students tended to be highly motivated to return to their home schools. More of these students completed the level system and fewer dropped out or were expelled.

Students who had been previously assigned to the ALC were more resistant to working through the level system. The program director suggests that this may be because in previous years, all the students had to do was "serve their time" and return to their home schools whether they improved their behavior or not. They apparently did not believe that they would actually be retained at the end of the

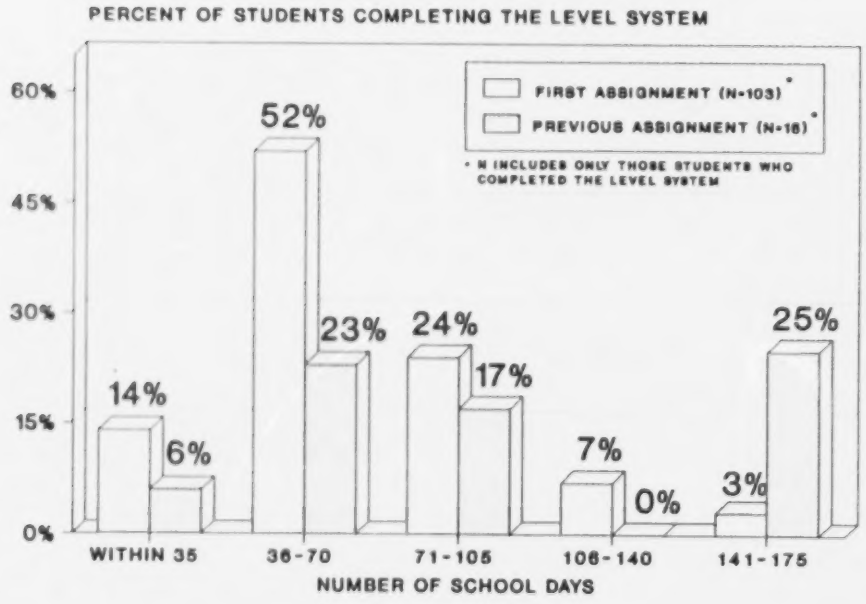
semester. Thus, fewer of these students successfully completed the level system, and a greater proportion dropped out or were expelled. Figure 1 compares the final dispositions of first-time and previously assigned students.

FIGURE 1
FINAL DISPOSITIONS FOR
FIRST-TIME AND PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED STUDENTS



Not only did more first-time students complete the level system compared to previously assigned students, but they tended to do it in a shorter length of time. Figure 2 shows the number of days it took to complete the level system for first-time and previously assigned students.

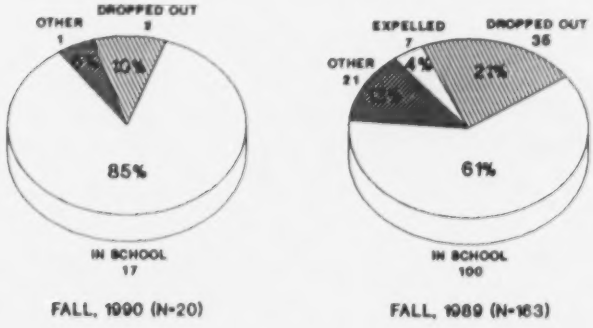
FIGURE 2
NUMBER OF DAYS TO COMPLETE THE LEVEL SYSTEM
FIRST-TIME AND PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED STUDENTS



Twelve-week Follow-up

Students who had completed the level system by the end of the fall, 1990 semester (N=20) were followed 12 weeks into the spring semester in order to assess their success on return to their home schools. Figure 3 shows 12-week follow-up dispositions for the 20 students who returned to their home schools at the end of the fall, 1990 semester compared to students who returned to their home schools at the end of the fall, 1989 semester. After completing the level system, more students were still in school, fewer had dropped out, and none had been expelled, compared to last year.

FIGURE 3
12-WEEK FOLLOW-UP
FALL, 1990 AND FALL, 1989



Recidivism

In the first year of the level system, recidivism has dramatically decreased. During the 1990-91 school year, 119 students completed the level system. Of these, a few (6%) were reassigned to the ALC after returning to their home schools. By contrast, of the 163 students who returned to their home schools at the end of the fall, 1989 semester, 21% were subsequently reassigned to the ALC.

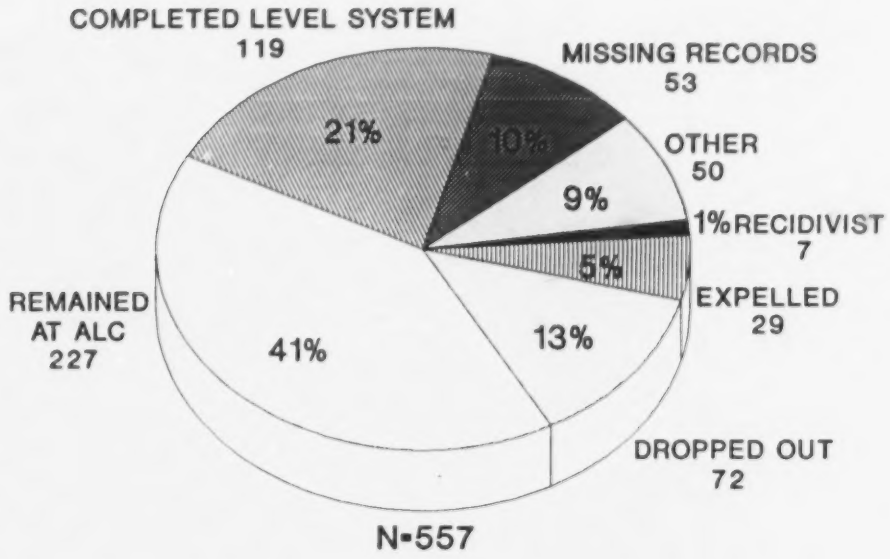
More data would have to be collected to assess if the level system has a long-term effect on recidivism. However, **these data suggest that if students referred for behavioral reasons show and maintain a change in their behavior, they are less likely to be reassigned to the ALC.**

Comparisons between this year and last year should be interpreted with caution. Because of the restructuring of the ALC program, it is essentially a comparison between two different programs. However, these results suggest that the behavioral approach of the level system has been successful in helping students change their problem behaviors.

Overall Final Dispositions

By the end of the 1990-91 school year, one in five (21%) of all ALC students (N=557) had successfully completed the level system and returned to their home schools. Less than half (40%) had not completed the level system and must return in the fall of 1991. Figure 4 shows the final dispositions for all students by the end of 1990-91. Note: Because of the transient nature of students' length of stay, increased paperwork, and time constraints for data collection, final dispositions for some students are missing.

FIGURE 4
OVERALL FINAL DISPOSITIONS 1990-91



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THE THREE-TIER REMOVAL SYSTEM

Findings:

1. The number of behavioral referrals to the ALC has not significantly decreased, suggesting that home school administrators are not fully utilizing the Tier 1 referral options.

2. The Discipline Reporting (DISC) file is not being accurately updated by many home schools. Over one fourth (28%) of the students enrolled for behavioral reasons did not have the required information entered into the DISC file. As a result, the Discipline Summary Data (DISS) file appears to be underreporting districtwide disciplinary actions. The file contains only 427 referrals to the ALC, when 528 of the students enrolled at the ALC were referred for behavioral reasons (this does not include students who were referred but did not enroll).

Background Information

In the fall of 1990, ALC staff prepared a document outlining a plan for restructuring the ALC program (see Attachment B for an excerpt outlining its goals, rationale, and objectives). The part of the proposal most directly involving home schools was the three-tier removal system. In a series of meetings with principals and assistant principals, ALC staff outlined the rationale for the new removal procedures, provided handouts explaining the new system, its various options, advantages and disadvantages, and detailed procedures for implementation. In November of 1990, the ALC principal and project director appeared before the School Board, with a video presentation of the ALC and the new proposal.

Implementation/Usage

Implementation and usage of three-tier removal system cannot be accurately evaluated, because complete data could not be obtained. The sources for data on discipline incidents and subsequent administrative action are the Discipline Reporting (DISC) file, and the Discipline Summary Data (DISS) file in the District mainframe.

The DISC file is maintained and updated by the home school and contains student-by-student information about specific discipline incidents, including the date of the incident, specific offenses committed by the student, date of the disciplinary hearing, and disciplinary action (suspension, expulsion, removal to the ALC, etc.). Whenever a disciplinary hearing is held, and/or disciplinary action (removal to the ALC, expulsion, etc.) is taken, this information should be entered into the DISC file.

For the 1990-91 evaluation, the data on student offenses were read directly from the DISC file, instead of obtained from the ALC intake forms. However, **of the 528 ALC students referred for behavioral reasons, over one fourth (28%) did not have this disciplinary action entered in the DISC file.** This figure does not include students who were referred to the ALC but never enrolled. **Of the 22 schools who referred students to the ALC for behavioral reasons, 12 failed to enter at least one third of these referrals into the DISC file, and three of these schools failed to enter 50% or more of their referrals into the discipline file** (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5
STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALC
BUT NOT ENTERED IN DISC (BY HOME SCHOOL)

School Name	Total # Referrals	# Not In DISC	% of Total Referrals Not In DISC*
Johnston HS	55	12	22
Murchison MS	48	7	14
Porter MS	36	10	28
Pearce MS	33	4	12
Mendez MS	31	12	39
Reagan HS	28	4	14
Austin HS	24	9	37
Lanier HS	24	2	8
Kealing JH	23	6	26
Burnet MS	23	8	35
Bedichek MS	22	9	41
L.B. Johnson HS	**22**	**14**	**64**
Martin JH	21	4	19
Lamar MS	20	8	40
O. Henry MS	20	2	10
Crockett HS	**17**	**10**	**59**
McCallum HS	**14**	**7**	**50**
Travis HS	14	6	43
Dobie MS	13	0	0
Covington MS	9	0	0
Anderson HS	9	4	44
Bowie HS	9	4	44
Fulmore MS	9	4	44
Robbins HS	5	0	0
Total	**528**	**146**	**28**

* Figures represent proportion of total referrals from each school, and do not sum to 100.

The DISS file contains summative data of each type of disciplinary action, by semester, providing both school-by-school totals and totals for the entire District. **According to the DISS file, in 1990-91 a total of 427 removals were made districtwide, although there were 528 students actually enrolled in the ALC for behavioral reasons** (again, this does not include the students who were referred but never enrolled). The DISS file also reports a total of 178 probated removals to the ALC, 85 probated expulsions, and 76 expulsions, but it is difficult to assess how reliable these numbers are.

Although it is difficult to assess accurately the implementation and usage of the three-tier system, the fact that there has not been a significant decrease in behavioral referrals this year suggests that home school administrators have not yet begun to avail themselves fully of the options provided by the three-tier system.

ALC ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Findings:

1. The majority (61%) of ALC students has had some contact with the juvenile courts.

2. One in four (27%) students enrolled was referred for expellable and/or criminal offenses.

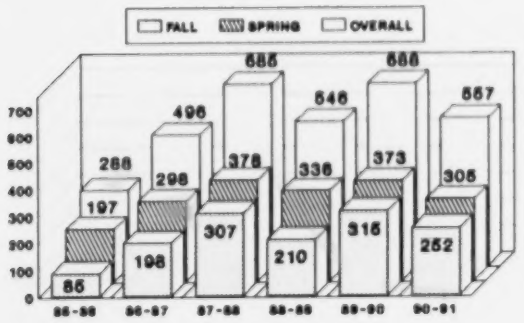
3. According to program records, more than half of high school (66%) and middle school (54%) students showed academic improvement while at the ALC.

4. There was a greater number of younger students enrolled at the ALC this year.

Enrollment

Over the last five years, enrollment at the ALC has steadily increased to an all-time high of 688 students last year. Enrollment has decreased somewhat since last year, but still remains high. Figure 6 shows ALC enrollment over the last five years.

FIGURE 6
ALC ENROLLMENT 1985-1991



Overall ALC enrollment this year was 557, decreasing from last year's enrollment of 688, a reduction of 19%. Spring and fall enrollment followed the pattern of previous years, with fewer students enrolling during the fall semester (N=252) than in the spring semester (N=305).

However, a closer look at enrollment shows that the decline is somewhat deceptive. ALC enrollment is composed of three categories of students:

Behavioral Referral: These students are assigned to the ALC by their home school administrators following a disciplinary hearing.

Special Assignment: These students are not assigned to the ALC for behavioral reasons, and include students who were not successful in other alternative programs, returning dropouts, and middle school students who are overage for their grade.

Turman House: Turman House is a Texas Youth Commission halfway-house for juvenile offenders who are currently on probation. An AISD teacher is located at Turman House, but those juveniles who are not restricted to in-house detention may attend the ALC and/or another AISD school.

Last year, 151 of the overall population (22%) were Turman House or special assignment students, compared to 29 (5%) this year. **The number of students assigned for behavioral reasons has decreased by only nine students.** One of the objectives of the implementation of Tier 1 removal options was to reduce the number of behavioral referrals, thus allowing for more individualized attention to students served. **The fact that the number of behavioral referrals has not significantly decreased suggests that home school administrators may not be utilizing fully the Tier 1 removal options.**

Student Characteristics

The ethnic composition and the ratio of male to female students enrolled at the ALC has changed very little over the past year. **However, there has been an increase in students of a younger age and a lower grade level enrolled this year.**

Ethnicity and Gender

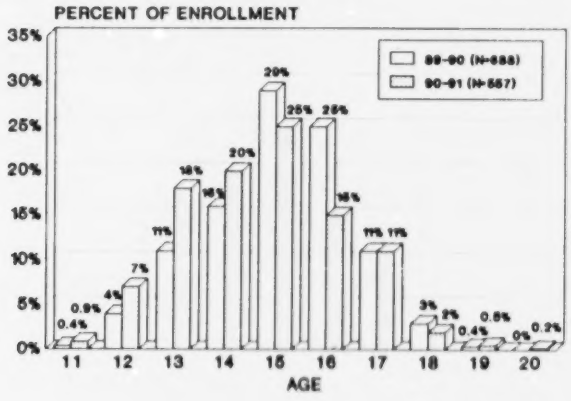
- More than one third (39%) of ALC students were Black, 40% last year,
- Almost half (48% for both years) were Hispanic, and
- A small percentage (13%) were Other, 12% last year.

Most (75%) ALC students are male, although the number of female students has increased from 21% last year to 25% this year.

Age and Grade

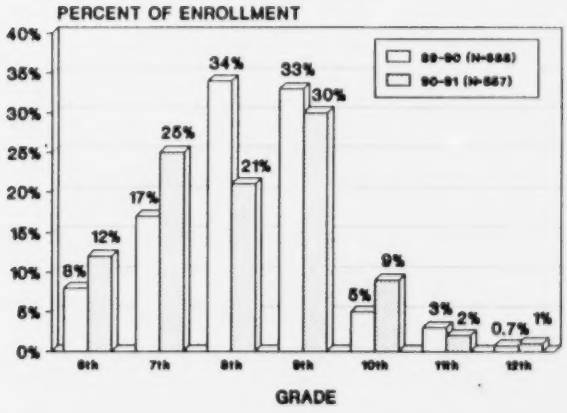
There appears to be an increase in younger students enrolled in the ALC this year. As Figure 7 illustrates, the greatest decrease of the individual age groups has been among 16-year-olds, while the greatest increase has been among 13-year-old students.

FIGURE 7
ALC ENROLLMENT BY AGE
1989-90 AND 1990-91



The grade level of ALC students has also changed. This year, the percentage of eighth graders has dropped from one in three (34%) to one in five (21%). At the same time, sixth- and seventh-grade enrollment has increased, with seventh graders showing the greatest increase. As illustrated in Figure 8, seventh-grade enrollment has increased from 17% to 25% of overall enrollment.

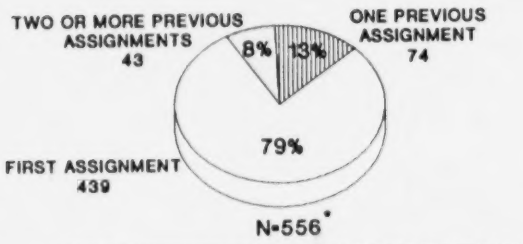
FIGURE 8
ALC ENROLLMENT BY GRADE
1989-90 AND 1990-91



Previous Assignments

The number of students at the ALC who have been enrolled in previous semesters has increased from 74% in 1989-90 to 79% this year. Figure 9 shows the number of previous assignments for students enrolled at the ALC this year.

FIGURE 9
PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENTS
1990-91



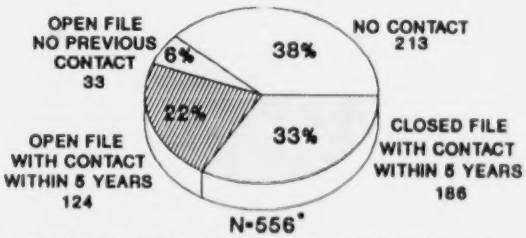
* PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT DATA NOT COLLECTED FOR ONE STUDENT

Juvenile Contact

According to records maintained by the juvenile court, the majority (62%) of the students currently enrolled at the ALC has had some contact with the juvenile courts.

In previous years, adjudicated students were identified using indirect methods and self-report. As a result, it is likely that previous data on juvenile contact were underreported (see Swanson & Williams-Robertson, 1990). This year, data on adjudicated students were collected from records maintained by the juvenile courts. Two kinds of lists are maintained: a list of juveniles who currently have open files with the court, and a master list of all juveniles who have had some contact with the courts within the last five years. Figure 10 shows the extent of juvenile contact for students enrolled at the ALC this year.

FIGURE 10
JUVENILE CONTACT
1990-91



* JUVENILE CONTACT DATA WAS NOT COLLECTED FOR ONE STUDENT

Student Offenses

The disciplinary offenses for which students were referred to the ALC have changed very little since last year (See Swanson & Williams-Robertson, 1990). This year (See Attachment C for specific offenses), 58% of the students were referred for insubordination, 58% for disruption, 54% for attendance violations, and 43% for abusive conduct towards other students. (Most students were referred for more than one offense, so percentages do not sum to 100)

However, one quarter of students (27%) was referred to the ALC for offenses for which they could have either been expelled (such as vandalism, or alcohol-related offenses) or arrested (such as assault, arson, possession or sale of a controlled substance, or possession or use of a weapon).

Academic Summary

ALC staff compiled an academic summary of students who received final grades at the end of the spring, 1991 semester by comparing students' final grades with their grades at the time of their enrollment at the ALC. Students who completed the level system before the end of the spring, 1991 semester were not included in the summary. Three classifications were used and are defined as follows:

- Improved: Students who were passing more courses, or had a higher grade average at the end of the spring, 1991 semester than at the time of their enrollment.

- No Change: Students who were passing the same number of courses, or had the same grade average at the end of the spring, 1991 semester as they did at the time of their enrollment.

- Declined: Students who were passing fewer courses, or had a lower grade average at the end of the spring, 1991 semester than they did at the time of their enrollment.

Of the 224 middle school students receiving final grades:

- More than half (54%) improved academically,
- One in three (35%) showed no change, and
- A few (16%) declined academically.

Of the 112 high school students receiving final grades:

- Almost two thirds (66%) improved academically,
- A small percentage (17%) showed no change, and
- A few (16%) declined academically.

PROGRAM COSTS

The School-Community Guidance Center (SCGC) support program at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and Gardner-Betts House (GBH) was funded by a $100,000 grant from the Texas Education Agency. The budget for the 1990-91 school year (per December, 1990 amendment) was allocated as follows: $87,849 for Project Specialists, $ 50 for management, and $12,101 for evaluation. Subsequent to the December, 1990 amended budget, $4,510 was transferred from the Project Specialists component to fund summer school salaries. Final allocations were not available at the time of publication of this report.

GBH served a total of 638 students (including summer school), while the ALC served a total of 537 students. The overall cost per student, based on a $100,000 allocation, was $85 per student.

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ATTACHMENT A

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER

LEVEL SYSTEM

EXPECTED BEHAVIORS

A. On time to class
B. Bring notebook, paper, pen and pencil
C. Pay attention and follow instructions
D. Stay on task
E. Respect self, others and all property
F. Follow all school rules

Level I: To advance to the next day on this level, you must earn at least 70% (26) of 37 possible points. You must earn 70% for 5 days to advance to Level II.

Privileges	Rewards
Eat in cafeteria	

Level II: To advance to the next day on this level, you must earn at least 80% (30) of 37 possible points. You must earn 80% for 10 days to advnace to Level III.

Privileges	Rewards
Eat in cafeteria	Commendation letter to parents
Eligible for free-time activities in classrooms	Certificate upon completion

Level III: To advance to the next day on this level, you must earn at least 90% (33) of 37 possible points. You must earn 90% for 20 days to advance to Level IV.

Privileges	Rewards
Eat in cafeteria	Commendation letter to parents
Eligible for free-time activities in classrooms	Certificate upon completion
Eligible for field trips and special activities	Elibible for weekly rewards
Eagle Room and gym priviliges on appropriate days	

Level IV: Maintenance Level. To advance to the next day on this level, you must earn 95% (35) of possible 37 points.

Privileges	Rewards
Same as Level III	Same as Level III
May be individual teacher's aide	Special meals
	Passes and coupons
	Home school ball games
	Recommendation for return to home school

ATTACHMENT B

RE-STRUCTURING OF THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER

GOALS:

1. TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR
2. TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM TO THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER
3. TO CONTINUE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS REMOVED FROM REGULAR SCHOOLS

RATIONALE:

- Increasing number of students referred to the Alternative Learning Center.
- Students returning to home schools show no improvement in behavior.
- Need change thrust of program from a "detention facility" to a behavior change "treatment" facility.
- Need to provide more structured and intense interventions for students.
- Need to insure students attend the ALC when assigned.
- Desire of the Travis County Juvenile Court to work more closely with the district to meet the needs of at-risk students and juvenile offenders.
- Need to facilitate the transition of students back to their home schools.
- Need to provide better exchange of information for returning students.

OBJECTIVES:

1. By the end of the second six weeks, schools will have fewer disruptive students at the home campus.
2. At the end of the semester, schools will have fewer disruptive students returning.
3. All students returning to their home school will have attended the ALC for the specified period of time.

TO ACCOMPLISH THESE OBJECTIVES, A THREE-TIER APPROACH IS PROPOSED:

Tier 1. To revise activities at the home school campus to provide alternative interventions prior to removal to the ALC via adjustment transfers and/or other local campus options.

Tier 2. To re-structure the ALC program to provide increased behavior change strategies.

Tier 3. To program jointly with the Travis County Juvenile Court to provide educational services for students who commit expellable offenses in a regular or alternative setting.

ATTACHMENT C

For the 1990-91 evaluation, most student offenses were read directly from the Discipline Reporting (DISC) file in the District's mainframe computer. These offenses are entered as a three-digit code denoting the general category and the specific offense. The table below gives the totals for both the general category as well as the specific offense.

OFFENSE CATEGORIES 1990-91

OFFENSE CATEGORY	SPECIFIC OFFENSE	#	%*
Attendance		287	54.4
	Class cutting	156	29.5
	Tardy	29	5.5
	Leaving class w/o authorization	34	6.4
	Failure to return to class	11	2.1
Tobacco		3	0.6
	Prohibited use	3	0.6
Insubordination		304	57.6
	Failure to follow instructions	200	37.9
	Refusal to go to detention or ISS	31	5.9
	Misrepresentation or forgery of permit	6	1.1
	On campus w/o authorization	20	3.8
	Violation of a law, policy, or rule	47	8.9
Disruption		304	57.6
	Misbehaving	85	16.1
	Talking in class	14	2.7
	Running	4	0.8
	Throwing objects	9	1.7
	Disruption in class	93	17.6
	Disruption out of class	33	6.3
	Disruption of the educational process	66	12.5
Abusive Conduct (Toward Students)		229	43.4
	Rude, profane language or gestures	47	8.9
	Harassment or intimidation	18	3.4
	Extortion or blackmail	3	0.6
	Threats or incitement of threats	43	8.1
	Coercion	3	0.6
	Fighting	82	15.5
	Assault	33	6.3

Abusive Conduct (Toward Adults)		128	24.2
	Rude, profane language or gestures	88	16.7
	Harassment or intimidation	5	0.9
	Extortion or blackmail	1	0.2
	Threats or incitement of threats	22	4.2
	Coercion	2	0.4
	Physical contact	6	1.1
	Assault	4	0.8
Property		51	9.7
	Unauthorized entrance	1	0.2
	Robbery, theft or stealing	22	4.2
	Possession of stolen property	5	0.9
	Vandalism	12	2.3
	Arson	2	0.4
	Destruction of property	9	1.7
Weapons		31	5.9
	Possession	29	5.5
	Use	2	0.4
Alcohol		9	1.7
	Possession	4	0.8
	Consumption	3	0.6
	Under the influence	2	0.4
Controlled Substance		37	7.0
	Possession	22	4.2
	Consumption	7	1.3
	Under the influence	6	1.1
	Sale	2	0.4
Other		15	2.8
	Gambling	3	0.6
	Indecent exposure	3	0.6
	Sexual behavior	3	0.6
	Unclassifiable	4	0.8
	Criminal mischief	2	0.4
Total		**1398**	

* Most students were referred for more than one offense, with an average of 2.6 offenses per student. Therefore, this count cannot be unduplicated and percentages do not sum to 100.

ATTACHMENT D

SCGC Court Component
Gardner-Betts House
Juvenile Detention Center for Travis County

Fall and Spring, 1990-91

Children Served (unduplicated count) **N = 515***

Gender (unduplicated count)

458	male
57	female

Ethnicity (unduplicated count)

1	Asian or Pacific Islander
200	Black, not of Hispanic Origin
223	Hispanic
91	White, not of Hispanic Origin

Enrollment (unduplicated count)

312	Students enrolled in AISD
67	Students enrolled in another school district
132	Students not enrolled in a school
4	Unknown

***NOTE:** **These counts do not include those students served during summer school. See page 30 for summer school counts.**

Length of Stay (average):

7.56 days	Overall
92.00 days	Longest stay
1.00 days	Shortest stay
6.82 days	AISD enrolled students
7.18 days	Non-AISD enrolled students
8.76 days	AISD dropout students
10.08 days	Non-AISD dropout students

Frequency by Age:

Age	Frequency
10	0
11	5
12	16
13	50
14	103
15	143
16	162
17	35
18	1

AISD Students: Frequency by Grade and Ethnicity (unduplicated count)

	FREQUENCY			
	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
GRADE				
4	0	0	0	0
5	1	0	0	1
6	3	14	1	18
7	21	29	4	54
8	35	25	10	70
9	48	50	16	114
10	26	10	2	38
11	13	2	2	17
12	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**147**	**130**	**35**	**312**

Offense Categories: Duplicated Count

Offense	Frequency
Arson	5
Assault	76
Burglary (or attempted burglary)	116
Courtesy supervision	1
Criminal mischief/property damage	14
Criminal trespass	10
Delivery of (or intent to deliver) a controlled substance	8
Disorderly conduct	2
Escape from detention	5
Fictitious name	2
Forgery	3
Hindering apprehension or prosecution	1
Indecency with a child	2
Inhalant abuse	3
Injury to a child or elderly person	1
Minor in possession of alcohol	2
Murder	9
Possession of or carrying a weapon	20
Possession of components of explosive	1
Possession of controlled substance	84
Possession of drug paraphernalia	2
Public intoxication	4
Reckless conduct	2
Resisting or evading arrest	16
Robbery	37
Runaway	2
Sexual assault (or attempted sexual assault)	16
Terroristic threat	7
Theft (attempted)	79
Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle (or attempt)	82
Violation of a court order or failure to appear	221
Violation of parole	26
Temporary detention	29
Unknown	14
TOTAL	**902**

90.36

Summer School 1990-91

Children Served (unduplicated count) **N = 123**

Gender (unduplicated count)

103	male
20	female

Ethnicity (unduplicated count)

46	Black, not of Hispanic Origin
60	Hispanic
17	White, not of Hispanic Origin

Frequency by Age:

Age	Frequency
13	6
14	19
15	33
16	40
17	25

AISD Students: Frequency by Grade and Ethnicity (unduplicated count)

	FREQUENCY			
	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
GRADE				
5	1	0	0	1
6	2	4	0	6
7	5	13	1	19
8	13	14	4	31
9	10	12	2	24
10	5	1	0	6
11	1	1	0	2
TOTAL	**37**	**45**	**7**	**89**

Offense Categories (Duplicated Count)

Offense	Frequency
Assault/attempted assault	17
Burglary/attempted burglary	19
Criminal mischief	2
Escape	1
Failure to appear	6
Forgery	1
Injury to child/elderly person	1
Murder/attempted murder	7
Possession of drug paraphernalia	1
Possession of prohibited weapon	2
Possession/delivery of controlled substance	16
Retaliation	1
Robbery	1
Runaway	1
Sexual assault	1
Theft	16
Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle	16
Violation of a court order	23
Violation of parole	1
Temporary detention	9
TOTAL	**142**

NOTE: According to statistics provided by the project specialist at GBH, **19 juveniles were detained at GBH at least twice**, frequently for different offenses each time. Therefore, **in order to present the data accurately, the offense categories must be expressed as a duplicated count**. All other data are expressed as unduplicated counts.

Austin Independent School District

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